

Kent County Library Board of Trustees

Minutes of the September 27, 2021 Meeting

Present: Elisabeth Tully, President; Jay Silcox, Treasurer; Bronwyn Jones, Secretary; Alan Austen, Trustee; Judi O'Brien, Trustee; Arnessa Dowell, Executive Director; Chris Walmsley, Staff Member

The meeting was called to order at 2:02 pm.

Ms. Tully reviewed the agenda for the meeting. No changes were made.

The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed. Mr. Silcox moved to approve them as submitted. Dr. Austen seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Finance Committee & Treasurer's Report

Mr. Silcox reported that the Finance Committee had met the previous week and discussed the leases for the new library spaces.

Mr. Silcox moved to accept the lease as received for the space located at 119 N. Main St., Galena as recommended by the Finance Committee. Ms. Tully seconded the motion. The trustees discussed the lease as received. Ms. Tully called for a vote, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Silcox reviewed a lease for a space in Rock Hall, noting that the lease was for a two year term for \$1,000 per month plus electric costs, with the landlord paying other utilities and taxes. Mr. Silcox noted that the lease could not be renewed.

Mr. Silcox moved to accept the lease for the Rock Hall facility as received. Ms. O'Brien seconded the motion. Ms. Tully called for discussion. Mr. Silcox noted that the existing municipal building was recommended for demolition by consultants, and that the current future plans did not include a space for the library. The trustees discussed the lease and options for renewal and the future of the library in Rock Hall. The trustees also discussed the availability of materials from the former Rock Hall location. Ms. Dowell noted that a contingency plan had been developed if the materials were unrecoverable from the former location.

Mr. Silcox revised the motion to accept the lease for the Rock Hall facility with included option to renew. Ms. Tully seconded the revised motion, which was called to a vote and approved unanimously.

Mr. Silcox reviewed a fourth amendment to the lease for the existing North County Branch facility, extending the lease through the end of November. Mr. Silcox moved to accept the amendment as presented. Ms. Tully seconded the motion. The trustees confirmed that it was a

two month lease for \$900 per month. Ms. Tully called for a vote, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Silcox reviewed the Memorandum of Understanding for the Chestertown Library Inc., building, noting that the finance committee had discussed the ownership of utilities and maintenance responsibilities. Mr. Silcox informed the trustees that proposed changes to the memorandum were included in the packet, which further clarified the responsibilities between the county and the library, but that additional clarification was desired. Ms. Tully questioned if there was a budget for the building. Ms. Dowell replied that the library had just been paying utilities, but that some items had not been addressed since the building was first renovated approximately 20 years ago. Ms. Dowell noted that there were several groups noted on the original memorandum, and that the revised memorandum would be presented to the groups once finalized.

Mr. Silcox informed the trustees that Ms. Dowell was preparing a proposal for a bookmobile, utilizing funds which were made available due to a state grant. Mr. Silcox noted that the Finance Committee had requested breakdowns of upfront and ongoing costs, and potential savings for the organization.

Mr. Silcox noted that there was a potential closure of the main branch of the library upcoming, which was brought up in the Finance Committee due to the potential impact related to moving costs and potential savings from utilizing staff time for moving materials into the new facility. Mr. Silcox informed the trustees that the Finance Committee did not take action since they indicated it would need to be discussed among the entire Board of Trustees.

The trustees discussed a short-term closure or modification of services for the Chestertown location of the Kent County Public Library. The trustees questioned how staff time would be utilized during the closure, with Ms. Dowell responding that it would be used to move into the new Rock Hall facility or to prepare for the branches to move. The trustees reviewed pros and cons as well as options for services as presented by Ms. Dowell.

Ms. Tully moved to approve the second option presented, which included limited in building service hours complimented by curbside service. Mr. Silcox seconded the motion. Ms. Tully opened it for discussion. Dr. Austen questioned if there was a penalty in the contract for the renovation if not completed within the identified time, to which Ms. Dowell replied that there was for the renovations to the staff work room. Ms. O'Brien noted that the limited services were somewhat aligned with previous service models. Ms. Tully called for a vote, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Director's Report

Ms. Dowell informed the trustees that the management discussion and analysis letter for the Fiscal Year 2021 audit had been sent to the Finance Committee for review, and that the auditor

would be presenting at the October meeting. Ms. Dowell noted that a copy of the draft audit had been included in the supplemental documents for the meeting.

Ms. Dowell presented and reviewed a procedure for handling potential close contacts on the part of staff. Ms. Dowell noted that she had reached out to other shore libraries and the Kent County government related to vaccine policies, and that none of the library organizations, or the county, currently had policies or procedures related to staff vaccination. The trustees discussed development of a policy which would inform the current procedures. Ms. Tully noted that Ms. Dowell and Ms. Jones should work together on the development of the policy.

The trustees discussed efforts related to risk management, guidelines for other organizations, and potential for exploitation of policies and procedures by employees. Ms. Tully reiterated that she would like to see incentives offered for employees to become vaccinated. Ms. Dowell noted that there was currently an extremely high rate of vaccination among the staff. Ms. O'Brien raised concerns related to the responsibility to the public served by the library, and how consequences could be managed if or when something were to occur.

The trustees discussed the current efforts in place to protect staff and patrons, and how these should be modified to reflect current best practices and guidance. The trustees discussed employee travel and testing requirements and recommendations, as well as the availability of testing locally.

Committee Reports

Trustee Recruitment

Ms. Tully asked the trustees if there were any who needed to step down and would be unable to finish their terms, noting that if not, only her term would be ending, and that the recruitment efforts by the committee would be informed by that.

Ms. Jones informed the trustees that only one application had been received so far. The trustees discussed the recruitment process and what needed to be done to ensure an open and equitable process.

Strategic Planning

Ms. Tully reviewed the strategic planning committee which was composed of Dr. Austen, Ms. Counihan, Ms. O'Brien and Ms. Overton, noting that she would support as needed or desired. The trustees discussed what would be involved in beginning the process.

Funding Partner Reports

Friends of the Library

Ms. O'Brien reviewed the previous Friends of the Library meeting, noting that the Friends had contributed \$7,000 to the Fiscal Year 2022 budget, and that the organization was seeking more volunteers.

Ms. O'Brien noted that the book sale was upcoming, which would begin Thursday, September 30 and run through Sunday, October 3, with unsold items going to Discover Books.

Ms. Tully questioned if the book sale could be utilized as a resource for items for the Rock Hall collection. Ms. Dowell reviewed the donations process, noting that items were reviewed before they went to the Friends.

Foundation for the Kent County Public Library

Dr. Austen noted that there was a series of four meetings being conducted to help inform the future of the Foundation and how it could support the Library. Dr. Austen reviewed the first meeting, which was focused on the financial condition of the Foundation, and how funds should be utilized. Ms. Dowell reviewed the second meeting, which was focused on where the Library currently stood and organizational updates. Ms. Tully questioned if the topics for the following meetings were known. Ms. Dowell replied that they were, but she did not have them to hand.

Old Business

Staff Guidelines Revisions

Ms. Dowell and Ms. Tully discussed what support Ms. Dowell needed from the trustees to facilitate the process. Ms. Dowell and Ms. Tully agreed to meet and divide up the staff guidelines and supplemental documents which would then be sent to the trustees for review and to provide feedback.

New Business

Ms. O'Brien shared with the trustees that a patron had reported an excellent experience at the library, noting that staff treated the patron well and were knowledgeable.

No further business was brought before the trustees.

Ms. Tully moved to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Austen seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 4:01 pm.